

Production No. ____

The Simpsons

"Marge Knows Why the Jailbird Paints"

Written by

Tom Martin

Created by
Matt Groening

Developed by
James L. Brooks
Matt Groening
Sam Simon

This script is not for publication or reproduction. No one is authorized to dispose of same. If lost or destroyed, please notify Script Department.

THE WRITING CREDITS MAY NOT BE FINAL AND SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR PUBLICITY OR ADVERTISING PURPOSES WITHOUT FIRST CHECKING WITH TELEVISION LEGAL DEPARTMENT.

Return to Script Department
20TH CENTURY FOX TELEVISION
10201 W. Pico Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90035

FIRST DRAFT

Date 2/4/00

"Marge Knows Why the Jailbird Paints"

by

Tom Martin

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Homer is in bed sleeping away when Marge enters.

MARGE (OC)

Get up. (THEN FAST) Get-up, get-up,
get-up, get-up!

Homer cringes as the sound of Marge's voice smacks him awake.

MARGE

You promised we'd do something as a
family today and it's already noon.

HOMER

But, we did something as a family last
night. Don't you remember? At Moe's?
We laughed and told stories and bought
each other beer after beer.

MARGE

You were with Carl and Lenny last
night.

HOMER

(REACHING FOR PHONE) I wonder what
they're doing today?

Marge hangs up the phone.

MARGE

Forget it. You're spending the day
with the people you love most, like it
or not.

Homer looks at his family lined up at the foot of his bed
and moans sadly.

BART

(READING PAPER) Relax, Dad, I think I
found something that's fun for the
whole family... except Lisa. Today's
the prison rodeo.

LISA

Ugh, prison rodeo? Who wants to see a
bunch of violent criminals tormenting
defenseless animals?

INT. SIMPSON CAR - LATER

Everyone except Lisa is sporting a cowboy hat. They are
driving through the middle of a desert. The only structure
around is a big ugly prison in the distance.

HOMER

Hey, here's a joke for you kids. You
know why they put walls around prisons?
(OFF THEIR SILENCE) Because people are
dying to get in.

Homer cracks up. The rest of the family just stares.

LISA

Dad, that's why cemeteries have walls.

HOMER

Why would cemeteries need walls?

The car passes a sign that reads, "DON'T PICK UP HITCHHIKERS".

MARGE

(STATING THE OBVIOUS) A hitchhiker in these parts could be an escaped convict.

The car drives past an exhausted hitchhiker in a long white lab coat.

HOMER

Nice try, pal. Find someone else to murder with your ax.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - SAME TIME

The desperate man in the lab coat is holding an igloo cooler that has "Cancer Cure" written on the side.

SCIENTIST

If this cure for cancer stays in the sun much longer it'll spoil.

In the backseat of his broken-down car is a very pregnant scientist.

PREGNANT SCIENTIST

Keep hitching. The baby's coming.

The male scientist hitchhikes more frantically.

EXT. PRISON GROUNDS - DAY

A banner reads, "Springfield Prison Rodeo -- Bring Your In-laws -- Enjoy Our Outlaws." The Simpsons walk down a carnival midway surrounded by booths. Suddenly, a PRISONER sneaks away from a booth and escapes over a fence.

GUARD

Hey! One's getting away.

The GUARDS open fire. A hail of bullets bounces off the prisoner like many superballs.

ESCAPED PRISONER

(NONCHALANT) Alright, alright, you got me.

The prisoner meekly climbs back over the fence and resumes working his booth.

GUARD

Rubber bullets save the day again.

GUARD #2

(WORRIED) Yes... rubber bullets...

ESCAPED PRISONER (OC)

Hey, I'm bleeding.

EXT. "SCARED STRAIGHT" BOOTH - SAME TIME

Bart steps up to a scary looking SCARED STRAIGHT PRISONER.

BART

(PAYS) Let's see what you got.

The scared straight prisoner whispers in Bart's hear.

BART (CONT'D)

(TERRIFIED) I'll be good.

EXT. MIDWAY - SAME TIME

Homer browses a booth with a cute flower-trimmed sign that reads, "Simply Shivs." Displayed are stabbing implements made of toothbrushes, watches, glasses, knife handles...

SHIV PROPRIETOR

May I help you find a shiv, sir?

HOMER

Yes, I'm looking for something lethal
yet deadly.

SHIV PROPRIETOR

(THINKS, THEN GETS AN IDEA) Right this
way, sir.

EXT. PRISON RODEO STADIUM - ESTABLISHING

EXT. PRISON RODEO STADIUM - BLEACHERS

The crowd cheers for a prisoner riding a bull. The bull bucks the rider off and sends him flying over a wall. The prisoner looks around, realizes he's outside the prison grounds and runs for freedom.

The Simpsons approach looking for their seats. Homer hands an armed USHER/GUARD his ticket stub.

USHER/GUARD

(POLITELY) Sorry, sir, these seats are
on the other side of the arena.

Homer slowly pulls a concealed shiv out of his back pocket, threateningly.

HOMER

Oh really?

USHER/GUARD

(LOOKING AT TICKET CLOSER) Wait, my
mistake. You're down four rows to the
right. Enjoy the show.

Homer slowly puts the shiv back in his pocket.

HOMER

(THREATENINGLY) Thanks.

The Simpsons take their seats in the front row of the stands. They're just in time to see a deranged Charles Manson type do frenetic but skilled lasso tricks.

INT. PRESS BOX - DAY

A gruff prison WARDEN sits in front of a microphone.

WARDEN

(RE: ROPER) Look at 'em go. I know a lotta folks'd like to see the rope dangling him. He's evil, but he's good.

Homer absently claps as the crazy Charles Manson type prisoner finishes his lasso routine.

WARDEN (OC)

Now direct your attention over to the shoot, you'll see our next crooked cowboy saddling up tonight's dinner special.

Marge looks at the INTIMIDATING PRISONER on the bull. He looks like he would sound like Ray Leotta or Robert Downey Jr.

WARDEN (OC) (CONT'D)

His riding is sure to set this place on fire, which is what happened to his house after his meth lab exploded.

The prisoner rides the bull for a few seconds. After he's thrown, several RODEO CLOWNS run out to distract the bull. The rider runs past the Simpsons as he heads to safety.

MARGE

I'm glad there's a fence between us and that guy. He looks like one dangerous customer.

Homer watches the rodeo clowns distract the bull.

HOMER

Hey, these clowns aren't funny. Marge, make the clowns funny.

LISA

Dad, rodeo clowns aren't supposed to be funny.

HOMER

Mission accomplished.

BART

They're job is to distract the bull until the rider is safe.

HOMER

All clowns should be funny. (STANDS UP) Boo! I've laughed more at a Robin Williams movie.

One of the rodeo clowns approaches Homer.

RODEO CLOWN

You think you could do better.

HOMER

Couldn't do worse.

The clown grabs Homer and pulls him into the arena. The bull spots Homer and runs toward him. Homer takes off

running, zigzagging, jumping over barrels... Homer sees an open gate across the arena. He makes a final sprint to safety. The bull sees him and gives chase. Before Homer can make it, the bull rams him from behind launching him into the air. He lands hard at the feet of several rodeo clowns.

The rodeo clown hog-ties him. We hear Homer's back crack. The crowd laughs at Homer's misfortune.

RODEO CLOWN

(TO HOMER) Sounds like some people
think we're funny.

HOMER

(IN TERRIBLE PAIN) You poor deluded
clown. It's me they're laughing at.

Another rodeo clown brands Homer on the ass.

HOMER (CONT'D)

(SCREAMS IN PAIN)

The crowd cheers louder. Several guards come haul Homer away. The crowd gives him a standing ovation. He smiles through his pain and waves to his adoring fans.

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - LATER

Homer is lying on a couch unable to move. Bart and Lisa comfort him. Marge admires the art on the warden's wall.

HOMER

(LIFTING ICEPACK) The only feeling
below my waist is from where they
branded me.

Bart pokes Homer with the shiv. He doesn't budge.

BART

He's telling the truth.

CLOSE ON the brand: It depicts a cowboy hat behind prison bars. Under the brand there is a paragraph of small print that reads: Property of Springfield State Prison. Copyright 1999. The Cowboy-Bars symbol is a registered trademark of Springfield Prison Incorporated.

HOMER

I don't mind the brand, but why all the
legal mumbo jumbo?

WARDEN

You'll have to take it up with our
cowboy lawyer.

ANGLE ON

a nerdy LAWYER wearing full cowboy regalia.

COWBOY LAWYER

Howdy.

WARDEN

(WHISPIRING) He's so contrary, he once
sued a man just for snoring.

HOMER

That is contrary.

MARGE

(LOOKING AT A PAINTING) This is very
nice. Do you collect contemporary art?

WARDEN

Oh yeah, I'm a big art fan. You can't
keep me outta museums and galleries and
whatnot.

MARGE

Really?

WARDEN

I'm being funny. That inmate over
there did these paintings.

We see the tough looking prisoner Marge noticed riding the
bull. He cleans the mud off his boots with a stick then
flicks it on a wall.

WARDEN (CONT'D)

That waste of food and air is Jack
Burnham.

Marge stares at the painting then out the window at Jack.

MARGE

I know a little something about art and
a little something about people and any
one who has such an advanced artistic
sense couldn't be all bad.

WARDEN

Wanna bet?

BART

Bet him, Mom.

WARDEN

Our art teacher just quit. Since
you're such an expert, why don't you
take the job? You can see his advanced
artistic sense from close up.

MARGE

Well, I don't know--

WARDEN

That's what I thought. All talk.

BART

Mom an art teacher in prison. That
would be hilarious.

Homer, Bart, Lisa and the Warden all crack up at the idea.

MARGE

When do I start?

Everyone laughs louder.

MARGE (CONT'D)

I'm serious. I'll be the prison art
teacher.

This quiets everyone.

MARGE (CONT'D)

There. That's more dramatic.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPRINGFIELD PRISON - DAY - ESTABLISHING

INT. SPRINGFIELD PRISON - ENTRYWAY

Marge enters a grim high security room. A steel door slams shut behind her. She walks through a metal detector and is then frisked. The Warden approaches and Velcros sleeves onto her dress.

MARGE

What're you doing?

WARDEN

Exposed shoulder skin is prohibited
beyond this point.

MARGE

(UNEASY MURMUR)

INT. PRISON CLASSROOM - DAY

The Warden escorts Marge in. She sees several nasty looking hardened CRIMINALS. One inmate has made an easel out of a classmate. Another tattoos a guy with the art supplies. Jack sits quietly in the back, already painting.

WARDEN

When you've had enough, scream in
terror and I'll come runnin'.

Marge writes, "Art Therapy -- Mrs. Simpson" on a blackboard. She turns around and smiles at the class. The prisoners return friendly toothless smiles.

INT. DOCTOR HIBBERT'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

DR. HIBBERT examines an x-ray of Homer's spine. It's a mess, sections are missing, it twists into a double helix.

DR. HIBBERT

(WHISTLES) I'm afraid your days as a
rodeo clown are over.

HOMER

I always knew this day would come.
Anyway, go ahead and fix me. I gotta
get to work by lunch.

DR. HIBBERT

I'm sorry, but as a medical doctor, the
only thing I can do is perform
dangerous surgery or prescribe
addictive drugs.

HOMER

So get cuttin' and dopin'.

DR. HIBBERT

You see the trouble is, surgery and
drugs have never cured a single case of
back pain, not even once.

Hibbert hands Homer a business card.

DR. HIBBERT (CONT'D)

I'm going to send you to my
chiropractor.

HOMER

Hey, I thought real doctors hated
chiropractors.

DR. HIBBERT

Officially, we do. But that's because we're insecure. Deep down we know they can do a lot more for back pain than any of us so called medical doctors.

HOMER

I'll try anything. The stabbing pain keeps getting worse.

Dr. Hibbert notices that Homer has a scalpel in his back. He pulls it out.

DR. HIBBERT

Oh sorry. Must've lost that during Lovejoy's wart scraping.

INT. PRISON CLASSROOM - LATER

Marge paces the aisle acting impressed by the bad artwork. She approaches an inmate who is stabbing the canvas as if the brush were a knife.

MARGE

That's charming, Tumor, but try to use less of a stabbing action and more of a brushing stroke.

Marge guides Tumor's hand in a gentle brushing motion. He gets it, but when Marge lets go he starts stabbing again. She continues on to Jack who is working on a scene that uses a lot of harsh prison imagery. It's good.

MARGE (CONT'D)

Wow, your painting is so dramatic and moving.

JACK

(DISTANT) Thank you.

MARGE

If you keep looking, you can see it tells a story. That's what they call the narrative style.

JACK

(DUH) So I hear.

MARGE

How do you come up with your ideas?

JACK

(IMPATIENT) I sit and think.

MARGE

That's what I do too. You know, for a while I was obsessed with Ringo Star. That's all I could paint.

JACK

I'm sure you're very talented.

MARGE

Do you ever paint more uplifting stuff?

JACK

Sometimes. When I think about getting out of here.

MARGE

I think you should be released. You're not doing the art world any good in here.

JACK

Tell that to the warden.

Jack hands Marge a painting he finished earlier. It's a colorful landscape showing a silhouette of a man in a field under a bright blue sky.

JACK

I call this parole. (UNEMOTIONAL)

It's yours.

Marge is deeply moved by the gift.

MARGE

I don't know what to say -- thank you.

I know right where I'm going to put this.

Jack rolls his eyes at the sentimental Marge.

INT. SIMPSON LIVING ROOM - THAT EVENING

Marge removes a plaque that Homer won for a spaghetti-eating contest and replaces it with Jack's painting.

HOMER

Hey. My trophy.

MARGE

You don't need an award to prove you can eat a lot of spaghetti. All that matters is that you know it in your heart.

HOMER

The days when people worshiped the
competitive eater are long gone.

Marge approaches Homer who is still nursing his back.

MARGE

You know what's great about our house?
It's always open to those in need.

HOMER

Marge, please, no. I'm in too much
pain to have your sisters around.

MARGE

I'm talking about Jack Burnham. He
says that the warden won't give him
parole, because he has no where to go.

HOMER

(RELIEVED) Oh the convict? I thought
you were going to say Patty and Selma.
Yeah, the prisoner can stay here.

INT. PAROLE HEARING - WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

The warden rejects a line of HOPEFUL PRISONERS one-by-one.

WARDEN

(STAMPING PAPER) Denied! (STAMPING
PAPER) Denied! (STAMPING PAPER) Denied!

Jack steps to the front of the line. The warden is about
to deny him parole when Marge stands.

MARGE

I object!

Everyone looks at Marge like she's crazy.

MARGE

I mean. I'd like to propose that...
where as... said prisoner is hear by...

WARDEN

Just talk normal.

MARGE

Would you grant Jack Burnham parole if
I sponsored him?

WARDEN

No.

MARGE

I think Jack can get a job. He's got a
valuable marketable skill.

WARDEN

Oh sure, a painter can make as much
money as a good poet these days.

MARGE

You thought hiring me as art teacher
would make me see that Jack was a bad
person. Well, it didn't. It made me
even more sure that Jack should be
released so he can share his art with
the world.

WARDEN

(THINKING IT OVER. TO JACK) You wanna
go with this nut case?

JACK

Sure.

WARDEN

(STAMPS PAPER) Parole approved! You
want the next guy too?

A GIANT HIDEOUS PRISONER smiles at Marge, hopefully. Marge
shakes her head no.

WARDEN (CONT'D)

(TO HIDEOUS PRISONER) Denied!

INT. CHIROPRACTOR'S EXAMINING ROOM - DAY

Homer sits on the examination table. He eyes the human
spine model lustfully. He looks around slyly then grabs
the bones of the skeleton and starts gnawing on them. The
overly polished CHIROPRACTOR enters.

CHIROPRACTOR

Homer Simpson?

Homer freezes like a bad dog.

HOMER

Who wants to know?

CHIROPRACTOR

(SHAKING HANDS) I'm Doctor Steve.

Homer carefully returns the spine to its stand. Dr. Steve
positions Homer on the table and starts feeling his spine.

DR. STEVE

Whoa! Your back is really out of alignment. You must be in a great deal of pain.

HOMER

Hey, Steve, less yacking and more cracking.

DR. STEVE

Now that's a common misunderstanding. We don't actually "crack" backs. It's an adjustment. (PRESSING HOMER'S BACK) Now, you may hear a loud cracking sound.

After a long struggle, Homer's spine finally makes a barely audible cracking sound.

DR. STEVE (CONT'D)

(PROUDLY) There we go.

He grabs Homer's hand and helps him up.

HOMER

That's it?

DR. STEVE

For today.

HOMER

But my back still hurts.

DR. STEVE

For an injury like this I'll need to see you at least three times a week.

HOMER

But I wouldn't go to a real doctor
three times a week.

DR. STEVE

I'm a real doctor.

HOMER

Come on, Dr. Steve.

DR. STEVE

What? I am.

HOMER

Can you prescribe drugs?

DR. STEVE

No.

HOMER

Can you do surgery?

DR. STEVE

No.

HOMER

Steve, do real doctors let people call
them by their first names?

Dr. Steve turns away to hide his tears.

DR. STEVE

Please leave.

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - DAY

Marge and Jack approach the house. The wind blows a leaf,
which catches Jack's eye. He stops and watches it's
beauty.

MARGE

What are you looking at?

The lighting and the background scenery match the "parole" painting Jack gave Marge in class.

JACK

(STILL DISTANT) Why are you doing this
for me?

MARGE

I want to help.

JACK

No one ever helps me.

MARGE

Maybe that's your problem.

Marge opens the front door. We hear the sound of the TV blaring, glass breaking, and kids fighting.

MARGE

Welcome to my prison.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Grandpa presses a button on the arm of the chair and is mechanically boosted into the standing position.

HOMER

Wow. That machine did the hard part of
standing up for you.

GRAMPA

Son, now that you're old it's time I
teach you the facts of geriatric life.

HOMER

Hey, I just have a sore back. I'm not
"old" like you're old.

Grandpa hands Homer an elastic back brace.

GRAMPA

Don't fight it son. Take this man-
girdle. It does the job your back
muscles used to do. It's a godsend.
And this one's full of magnets.

HOMER

(RELUCTANTLY) Well I did read
somewhere that magnets are supposed to
do something.

GRAMPA

Oh, yeah, magnets are a godsend.

Homer starts to put the back brace on.

GRAMPA (CONT'D)

What're you doing, dummy? First you
gotta rub the area with the pain cream.

Grandpa hands Homer a tube of ointment.

GRAMPA (CONT'D)

It's a godsend. It smells a little
like koala crap, but it'll keep anyone
from sitting next to you on the bus.
You know what else is a godsend...

HOMER

Stop saying everything's a godsend.

GRAMPA

Watch your tone boy.

HOMER

Listen. I'm young. And I'm strong. I don't need you and I don't need any of your old man junk.

Homer limps off in a huff then quickly returns.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Except for this back brace.

He grabs the back brace and leaves again. Grandpa sits back down on the chair. He presses the lift button and playfully boosts himself up and down. He turns the dial from "three" to "eight". It sends him flying into the wall across the room.

EXT. CURB - A FEW MINUTES LATER

As Homer reaches to get the mail out of the mailbox, the elastic back brace snaps, releasing an avalanche of gut.

HOMER

(STRUGGLING TO PUT IT ON) You gotta be

Alley McBeal to fit it this thing.

Homer loses his balance and falls, landing back first on an old metal trash barrel (the barrel is in the street and lying on its side. It's dented in the shape of a spine).

HOMER (CONT'D)

(PAINED) Marge... Lisa... Grampa?

Homer sees a truck barreling down on him. At the last second, he rolls so he and the trashcan end up on the sidewalk. The truck passes, just missing him. Homer

stands, relieved. After a beat he rotates his head then his torso.

HOMER (CONT'D)

My back pain. It's gone.

He squats and does a Russian dance.

HOMER (CONT'D)

(PICKING UP CAN) This trashcan is a
godsend.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD - DAY

Jack and Marge walk past a seedy tattoo shop. Marge notices an "Artist Wanted" sign in the window.

MARGE

Looks like our job search may finally
be over.

INT. TATTOO PARLOR - A SHORT TIME LATER

TATTOO SHOP OWNER

Gee, I don't know. Our clientele these
days is mostly sorority girls and
clergy. I don't know how they'd feel
getting a tattoo from an ex-con.

INT. MOE'S - LATER

Marge and Jack are talking to MOE.

MOE

I'll give you a job. You can start by
mopping up the puke in the men's room.

JACK

(RELUCTANT) How much does it pay?

MOE

Pay?! (BRANDISHING MOP) Get outta
here you ungrateful -- this is what
happens when you try to help people.

INT. POWERPLANT - DAY

Homer is strutting around with a spring in his step. He intentionally drops his pencil.

HOMER

Whoops...

He makes many unnecessary back swivels as he picks up the pencil. LENNY and CARL watch amazed.

LENNY

Wow, check out the range of motion in
Homer's lumbar region.

Homer replaces an empty 5-gallon water bottle with a new one. He uses bad form.

CARL

Now he's lifting a heavy object without
bending his knees.

LENNY

Has he lost his mind?

Homer's back makes a sickening POPPING sound.

LENNY/CARL

There it is.

Homer limps over to his trashcan. He rolls on it, cracks his back and stands up, dusting his hands.

HOMER

Good as new.

CARL

What's with you? You should be looking
at two to four weeks of bed rest.

HOMER

Not any more. You might say I
"stumbled" upon a cure for back pain.

He shows the guys the trashcan he fell on.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Thanks to this miracle device my name
is going to be as famous as the guy who
cured polio... Marco Polio.

LENNY

Think you can fix my sciatica?

HOMER

Couldn't hurt to try.

Homer cracks Lenny's back on the trashcan. Lenny stands,
swivels his torso, does a couple of deep knee bends and
jumps up and down.

LENNY

It worked. My searing leg pain is now
a gentle numbness.

Lenny jumps up and down through the rest of the scene.

CARL

Hey, do me. My constant slouching has
really done a number on my upper back
not to mentions my self-esteem.

Homer cracks Carl over the trashcan. Carl stands up with perfect posture. He thrusts his chest out brazenly. An attractive FEMALE COWORKER passes by.

FEMALE COWORKER

Hi Carl.

CARL

(CONFIDENT) Carl likes what Carl sees.

Carl catches up with the female coworker and chats her up.

INT. HOMER'S OFFICE - LATER

There is a line of eager coworkers outside his office. Mr. BURNS cuts to the front.

MR. BURNS

Can this apparatus fix my scoliosis?

HOMER

I don't know what that is, so I'm going to say yes.

Homer picks up Mr. Burns. He bends like a rag doll. As Homer adjusts him, there are many strange crackling, popping and hissing sounds.

HOMER

There you go.

Homer returns Burns to the standing position. Burns is much, much taller.

MR. BURNS

I had almost forgot I used to be six foot six inches.

We MATCH DISSOLVE from the line of workers in Homer's office to...

EXT. SIMPSON GARAGE - DAY

...a line of townspeople outside Homer's garage. A sign reads: "Homer-practor On Duty."

Homer adjusts CLETUS who pays with a couple of chickens. He quickly moves on to DISCO STU. Stu gives him the cool-guy finger-pistol gesture as payment. Homer responds with the finger rubbing thumb "pay me" gesture. Stu pays and leaves. He continues moving through the line.

EXT. SIMPSON GARGE - LATER

As Homer counts a big stack of cash, Dr. Steve approaches.

DR. STEVE

What do you think you're doing here?

HOMER

Cracking backs, same as you.

DR. STEVE

Same as me? I spent almost two years in school earning a degree.

HOMER

I have a degree too -- from the school of hard knocks.

DR. STEVE

They no longer have a chiropractic school.

HOMER

You're just jealous because my trashcan works better than your fancy flat table and skilled hands.

DR. STEVE

There's no scientific evidence that your device does anything at all. In fact, you may be hurting people, not helping people.

HOMER

Boy, talk about irony. There was a time, not too long ago, when The American Medical Association used that argument against chiropractors. Now you're treating my breakthrough the same way. (SHAKING HEAD) Think about the irony... Are you thinking about it? Because if you do, I think you'll see how delicious the irony is.

Dr. Steve throws Homer against the wall.

DR. STEVE

You've been warned. Stop or we'll stop you. Understand?

HOMER

Your irony is hurting me.

Dr. Steve drops Homer and exits.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD ELEMENTARY - DAY

Marge and Jack pull up to the curb. Bart and Lisa are waiting with PRINCIPAL SKINNER.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

Your tardiness has ruined my plans. I was going to spend the afternoon at the starving artists' sale looking for someone to paint a school mural.

Marge makes a beeline for Skinner.

MARGE

Look no further. Here's your man.

Marge hands Skinner a book of photos of Jack's paintings.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

Well, hiring this stranger would save me from having to interview a bunch of my former students who wasted their lives in the arts... I just need some information on him, like where he's been for the last five to ten years.

MARGE

(DEJECTED) I'm going to be perfectly honest with you. Jack's done time in the state pen...

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

Yes... state pen. Keep going.

MARGE

Factory. State pen factory (OUT OF BREATH FROM THE LIE).

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

You a ballpoint or felt tip man.

JACK

Ball point.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

Good. Less smudging. You're portfolio looks good. You start tomorrow.

MARGE

(TO THE EXITING SKINNER) And he won a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and--

LISA

Mom, you can stop the b.s. now. Jack got the job.

MARGE

(INTROSPECTIVE) Wow. Once I started lying I couldn't stop.

BART

Yeah, how about that.

For the first time Jack lets down his guard with Marge. He smiles and hugs her. Marge beams with pride.

JACK

Thank you. I won't let you down.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPRINGFIELD ELEMENTARY - DAY

Jack is in front of a blank wall mixing paint. Bart and Lisa approach with several other students. Finally MILHOUSE gets the courage to speak.

MILHOUSE

Is it true you were in prison?

JACK

We're all in a prison of sorts. Mine happened to be concrete and designed to hold violent criminals.

NELSON

Is that a yes or a no?

JACK

(CONFIDING) Yes. But if the principal finds out, I might lose my job.

NELSON

Don't worry. Your secret is safe with us. (THREATENINGLY OTHERS) Isn't it?

The other kids nod and mime buttoning their lips. Skinner approaches.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

Go away children. I need to discuss something interesting with this professional artist.

JACK

They can listen. It might be educational.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

No, we cut our art program. Exposure in a non-classroom setting will only make them ask questions.

The kids exit glumly.

JACK

Well, I'm anxious to get started.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

Glad to hear it. You'll find I'm pretty hands-off with you creative types. The only thing I ask is that you include our school mascot, Pupu the Puma.

JACK

Sure, I'll try to work in a puma.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

Great. You're the artist. I'll get outta your way and let you get started.

Skinner exits.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER (CONT'D)

(LEANS BACK IN) Make sure you include the puma.

Skinner exits again. Jack sighs. Skinner leans in again.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

And give all people and animals really
big eyes.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD ELEMENTARY - LATER

Jack is painting a vicious attacking puma. Skinner sees
the mural and comes running over.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

No, no, that's not what I had in mind.

JACK

(BRISTLING WITH ANGER) Something
wrong with my work?

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

Something's wrong with your brain.

Skinner draws on a napkin. Several kids watch with
anticipation as Jack tries to maintain his composure.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER (CONT'D)

(HANDING JACK THE NAPKIN) Here, do
this.

We see a CLOSE UP of the napkin. A cute little girl holds
hands with a non-threatening Puma walking on its hind legs.
A cheerful rainbow arcs over the scene.

JACK

(SEETHING) This isn't really my style.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

If you want to keep your job, you'll
make it your style.

Jack storms off in anger.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

Hey, where are you going? I'm counting
this as one of your breaks.

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - THAT NIGHT

The family and Jack are eating dinner. Jack seems
agitated.

MARGE

So, mister professional artist, how do
you like your job?

JACK

(SLAMMING FORK ON PLATE) Skinner's
really getting on my nerves.

BART

I don't think anyone would mind if he
should say... turn up missing.

JACK

(BRIGHTENING) Really?

MARGE

Bart. No instigating murder.

JACK

Skinner's notes are ruining the mural.
I had more artistic freedom in prison.

HOMER

So much irony.

MARGE

I understand. But please try and work through it. You can do what you want on your next project.

Jack, still angry, resumes eating. Bart tries to steal one of his fries. In a flash, Jack has a piece of celery against Bart's throat. Jack quickly releases Bart.

JACK

(EMBARASSED) Sorry. Old habits.

MARGE

No. He had it coming, using such atrocious manners.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD ELEMENTARY - DAY

Several kids watch Jack paint. The mural depicts a powerful sexy woman with wings of an eagle. She holds a torch. Out of the flame spring images of various school subjects. Beside the woman is a leaping vicious puma. From Skinner's notes Jack included a cheerful rainbow.

LISA

(LOOKING AT MURAL) Why am I not ashamed of Springfield Elementary right now? Oh my goodness, it's school pride.

Skinner runs up and knocks the brush out of Jack's hand.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

Wrong! The sexy female form has no place in art.

JACK

(FURIOUS) Listen, I know what I'm
doing--

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

I gave you simple instructions, Lady
Knowledge walking under a rainbow with
Pupu the Puma.

JACK

But--

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

Did you even look at the napkin?

JACK

I added the damn rainbow--

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

I want to see the napkin right now.
I'm gonna shut my eyes, open my mouth
and put my hand out until I get that
napkin.

Jack is about to stuff the napkin into Skinner's mouth.
Instead he kicks the wall.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER (CONT'D)

Watch it fella, that's school property.

As Jack glares at him, Skinner takes out a cute puma Beanie
Baby.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER (CONT'D)

You're lucky I'm a Beanie Baby
collector.

Skinner gently pulls it out of a protective bag with tongs.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER (CONT'D)

(HANDING IT TO JACK) Now this is a
Puma. Get a look at it. That's what
we want -- don't bend the tag.

Skinner returns the Beanie Baby to its protective bag.

JACK

(MENACING) Alright. You asked for it.
I'll give what you want. I'll give you
exactly what you want.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

(OBLIVIOUS) Finally. Thank you.

EXT. SIMPSON HOUSE - DAY

Looking over his shoulder in fear, Homer finishes adjusting
Moe over the trashcan. He helps Moe up.

HOMER

(WHISPERS) There you go.

MOE

Homer, everyone in town is talking
about your miracle cure.

Suddenly, Homer notices Dr. Steve and several other angry
CHIROPRACTORS approaching.

HOMER

(SCREAMS)

Homer tries to shut his garage door on them. Thanks to
their limber spines, they're able to limbo under the door
before it closes all the way.

DR. STEVE

I warned you not to practice your
quackery, but you wouldn't listen.

Moe sneaks out the window, abandoning Homer.

MOE

(AS HE'S LEAVING) Hey, good luck with
your ass-kicking, there.

DR. STEVE

Let's get 'em.

The chiropractors start beating up Homer. One grabs Homer in a headlock. It looks like he's going to break Homer's neck, martial arts style. His neck makes a loud cracking noise. The chiropractors release him.

HOMER

Hey, that felt pretty good.

DR. STEVE

Yeah, well studies show that frequent
neck adjustments increase your chance
of stroke.

HOMER

You bastards!

Homer picks up the trashcan and charges the chiropractors. He knocks several of them over with it. Finally they overpower him. They grab Homer from behind while Dr. Steve punches him.

DR. STEVE

(PUNCHING HOMER) Who's not the real
doctor?

HOMER

You aren't?

DR. STEVE

(OFFENDED) What? (PUNCHING HOMER
HARDER) I guess you don't learn.

HOMER

Could you repeat the question?

Lisa enters the garage.

LISA

What's going on?

The chiropractors grab the trashcan and race off. Homer
collapses to the ground.

LISA (CONT'D)

Dad, they're getting away with your
trashcan.

HOMER

(OUT OF BREATH) I can't beat them.
They're too strong and limber.

LISA

You have to try.

HOMER

I've been a fool. No one can defeat
the powerful American Chiropractic
Association... (TO CAMERA) No one.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD ELEMENTARY - NIGHT

Principal Skinner stands at a podium. On stage with him
are SUPERINTENDENT CHALMERS, Jack, and Marge.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

When Superintendent Chalmers made funds
available for a school mural, I said
two words, "thank" and "you."

The crowd claps politely.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER (CONT'D)

And now, the moment you've all been
waiting for, Superintendent Chalmers
will unveil the school's new mural.

Chalmers pulls open the curtain revealing the mural. Only
Marge cheers enthusiastically. The rest of the audience is
disappointed. It's a cartoon puma walking hand in hand
with a cloyingly cute little girl under a rainbow.
Children surround them. All the characters have really big
eyes.

FLANDERS

Well, it's a bit too cutesy for my
tastes.

SUPT. CHALMERS

Skinner!

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

You don't like it?

SUPT. CHALMERS

Where's the edge?

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

(COVERING) We'll have to ask the
artist. Jack, where is the edge?

JACK

Hey, I gave you exactly what you wanted.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

(WALKING AWAY) If you want to make anything of yourself you're going to have to develop a stronger vision...

Jack starts to follow Skinner. Marge grabs him.

MARGE

Hey, that went okay. Let's go get some ice cream, what do you say? We have a lot to celebrate.

JACK

I'll meet you there. I'm too upset. I have to cool off.

Jack walks away.

INT. ICE CREAM SHOP - NIGHT

The family sits at the table. There is an empty seat where Jack should be. Everyone is finishing their sundaes.

HOMER

(REACHING FOR JACK'S SUNDAE) Jack would've wanted me to have this.

MARGE

Give him a few more minutes.

In the background sirens blare. Milhouse enters.

MILHOUSE

The school's on fire!

BART

God really does answer prayers.

MARGE

Oh no, I hope Jack's okay.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD ELEMENTARY - NIGHT

The mural is on fire. GROUNDSKEEPER WILLIE battles the blaze with a garden hose.

GROUNDSKEEPER WILLIE

(PANICKED, TO LENNY AND CARL) Aren't
you volunteer firefighters?

Lenny and Carl pull cards out of their wallets.

CARL

Not no more, my card expired.

LENNY

Mine too.

Lenny and Carl high-five and continue to happily watch the school burn.

ANGLE ON

MARTIN PRINCE being restrained.

MARTIN

Globie's in there!

He breaks free and runs into the burning school. He quickly runs out, having rescued the globe.

The Simpsons arrive. Marge has Jack's sundae in a to-go container.

LISA

All his hard work, up in flames.

MARGE

Whoever did this should be ashamed of
themselves.

Bart and Homer exchange a "Marge is clueless" look.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD ELEMENTARY - A LITTLE LATER

The fire is extinguished. The police are investigating.

CHIEF WIGGUM

Hmm, this footprint could be a clue.
It seems to match my print perfectly.
And I'm standing in it! Lou, arrest
me. And take me to the station and
beat me till I confess... please.

The warden approaches with Jack in cuffs.

WARDEN

Here's your man.

MARGE

What's going on?

WARDEN

I'm arresting your gentle artist for
arson.

MARGE

Well you have the wrong guy. There's
no way Jack would burn his own artwork.

JACK

No, Marge, I did it.

MARGE

You wouldn't do something like that.

It's not like you.

JACK

Actually it's exactly like me.

MARGE

No it isn't.

JACK

Look lady. You're a nice person. I'll never forget what you did. But I got a bad temper. And when I get mad, I do stupid things. Maybe I am better off in jail.

MARGE

(DESPERATE) You should arrest Principal Skinner. He's the one who caused this.

HOMER

Hey, where is Skinner?

They hear a stomping sound. They turn to see Skinner very nearby, bound and gagged. The second the gag is removed he starts criticizing Jack.

PRINCIPAL SKINNER

You call this a fire? Very amateurish.

If you wanted to burn down the school you should've--

Jack lunges at Skinner. The warden shocks him with a tazer. Jack jumps back in pain.

WARDEN

I hope the art teacher learned her lesson.

MARGE

I'll never give up on people who deserve a second chance. If it's necessary to release one thousand convicts to rehabilitate just one, it would be worthwhile.

Jack and Marge exchange a sad look.

JACK

Good bye, Marge.

MARGE

Good bye, Jack.

The family watches as Jack is hauled away. A tear falls from Marge's cheek. A tear also falls from Homer's cheek.

BART

Dad what are you crying about?

We see the sundae Marge is holding has completely melted.

HOMER

It's such a tragic waist.

Marge thinks that Homer's crying about Jack. She comforts him. They softly weep into each other's arms while Homer scoops some of the melted sundae with his finger.

END.